

# **Volunteer Fire Assistance Program (VFA)**

## **Department of Natural Resources – Program 5**

### **I. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

The VFA program has several objectives. One is to upgrade the performance of small fire departments and thus make rural communities a safer place to live and make investments more attractive. Another is to foster cooperation between these fire departments and the state forestry organization.

This is achieved by passing grant money from the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry to the State Forester's Office. The State Forester's Office then selects grant recipients, passes on the grant money, and ensures compliance with the grant conditions.

### **II. PROGRAM PROCEDURES**

Funds are provided to the State Forester by the USDA Forest Service upon receipt of an approved grant program. The state sends applications to all fire departments which are registered with the State Fire Marshall except those that (1) are federally funded, (2) are privately owned, or (3) serve more than 10,000 population. The state chooses grantees based on a point system used to evaluate returned applications.

The state also has the option to retain the grant money and use it to provide training and/or equipment to qualifying fire departments. Grant compliance requirements are the same either way.

### **III. COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS AND SUGGESTED AUDIT PROCEDURES**

#### **A. TYPES OF SERVICES ALLOWED AND UNALLOWED**

##### Compliance Requirements

Grant monies can be used for any purpose, which will upgrade the fire department except the following:

1. purchase of land or buildings
2. maintenance, repair or upkeep of buildings
3. purchase of medical supplies or training not directly related to fire
4. any equip not fire related
5. normal operating expenses

##### Suggested Audit Procedures

- Determine that expenditures comply with grant terms.

## B. ELIGIBILITY

### Compliance Requirements

Only fire departments which are registered with the State Fire Marshall are not federally funded or privately owned, serve less than 10,000 population, and are in compliance with past grants are eligible. Consolidated applications from more than one fire department will be accepted so long as no single department serves more than 10,000 population.

### Suggested Audit Procedures

- Compare list of grantees against State Fire Marshall's list of registered fire departments.
- Determine that grantees are not federally or privately owned.
- Determine that grantees serve less than 10,000 population.
- Determine that grantees are in compliance with past VFA program grants.

## C. MATCHING, LEVEL OF EFFORT, AND/OR EARMARKING REQUIREMENTS

### Compliance Requirements

The grantee or the state, if the state expends the funds, must match the grant.

### Suggested Audit Procedures

- Determine that matching requirements were met.

## D. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

### Compliance Requirements

Grantees must submit copies of invoices and canceled checks to show amount spent for purchase of specified items.

### Suggested Audit Procedures

- Determine that copies of invoices and canceled checks were submitted.

## E. SPECIAL TESTS AND PROVISIONS

### Compliance Requirements

There are no special tests or provisions.

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